



“This is a magic box where I plan to keep my dreams. So that one-day they come true. The most important dream is being able to go back to my home.

I painted my box this way because it is another dream I have: this is the sunset on the sea. I suppose that is the way the sea looks and I hope to go there someday. I painted the rainbow because the rainbow means happiness for me. And my dreams are happy. The blue means purity, what many people have taught me. The red means happiness, happiness I might have had.” Johanna

LIFE IN THE COUNTRY

“We heard the shots and everybody got down on the floor to protect them selves. They killed a lot of people. Everybody was running - it was guerillas and paramilitary. They threatened the people and wouldn’t let them work .”

“I myself I saw how they killed somebody when I was coming to Bogota.”

“Children forget about playing and being nice because of violence. A child gets very sad when she has to leave the land. People think that because we are young that we don’t understand what is happening but we are smarter than that.”

OUR LIVES, OUR VIEWS

DISPLACED CHILDREN & YOUTH, COLOMBIA

“We are happier here, in Bogota, because nobody harasses us. They are not going to kill us. That’s why we are happier. But in a way no ,because we don’t have much food. Before we didn’t have to beg or have papers as displaced people. But in a way, yes I am happier because we don’t have to lie on the floor and listen to bullet fights.”

“My friend and I spend all day on the street corner. We just stand there. That is what we used to do in our villages and so that is what we like to do here. But you have to be careful. The police can start bothering you. You can’t say anything. Because if you just look at them the wrong way they will beat you.”

“A few days ago somebody came with a list of people they were going to kill. And they really do it. The ones that do this are the police in civilian clothes.”

“After 9 p.m., nobody can be on the street. They can kill you, they call it “social cleaning”. They don’t like to see people with strange hairstyles and funny clothes. Last time, they came and got me. It was because I have an African hairstyle. They beat me in the head so much that I had to go to the hospital. I had to have 15 stitches.”

“All groups recruit boys. And if you try to escape and they catch you, they kill you. The police always think people from the poor areas are with the guerrilla. But we are not from any armed group. We are just young people.”